[187 cont.]

X 648 Tatishchev replied that he would not fail to make his submission known to the Empress. He promised him assistance and protection, but suggested, at the same time, that he swear the oath again. Abulkhair responded that he had already sworn the oath once, but in spite of this he was agreeable to swearing it again. At this the most senior member of the Moslem clergy was ushered into the tent with the Koran, and a [188] golden rug was brought on which the Khan knelt, and after having heard the reading of the oath, he kissed the Koran.

[793 778 641]

Immediately after the ceremony Tatishchev put aside for him a rich saber mounted in gold which, as a special mark of favor, the Khan was not to draw except against the enemies of Russia. At the same moment the elders and the common Kazaks swore the oath before Tevkelev in other tents.

The ceremony ended with a feast, during which, in order to divert and astonish the guests, the health of the Empress and that of the Emperor were drunk to, to the sound of the cannon.

The following day Sultan Nurali, eldest son of the Khan, arrived in Orenburg. He too was shown great honor, although less than that shown to his father. He too swore the oath in Tatishchev's presence and later received in the name of the Empress a saber mounted in silver.

[431]

The first meeting of the head of the Orenburg expedition with the Khan was soon followed by several others. Tatishchev and Abulkhair paid each other frequent visits, both in Orenburg and outside the fortress in the camp of the Kazak chief, in public and also in private. In these meetings it was settled:

1. That Erali Sultan, Abulkhair's son, who lived in Orenburg as hostage, should be sent back to the horde, and Khodji Akhmet, another son of the Khan should take his place.

2. That the Khan obligated himself to free and send back to Russia all Russian prisoners, not only those within the horde, but also those in all the neighboring lands.

[662]

We will mention in passing that he could never have carried out this promise, and when he made it he knew the impossibility of keeping his word.

*648 [191 cont.]
Later, in imitation of their father, they undertook to satisfy demands which were beyond their power to fulfill. These were: to
[728] make restitution of all the merchandise taken from the caravans which were robbed near Orenburg and to surrender all the Russian prisoners who were among the hordes. Finally, they announced that their father requested a certain number of cannon for the war against the Khivans, and also that a city be built on the Syr /Darya River/, after having drawn a preliminary plan of the site for which it was destined. As a result of this request, Prince
[654] Urusov sent the geodetic specialist, Muravin, and the engineer, Nazimov, along the Syr and from there to Khiva, and they, after having made the first map of the part of the steppes of the Kazaks and the lands of Khiva that they had seen, returned to Russia a year after their return from this mission. The artillery was absolutely refused to Abulkhair on the pretext that there was very little in the forts built along the Ural.

Nurali and his brother Erali had not yet left when Abul
[574] Mahmet, khan of the Middle Horde, who had long been awaited, was seen to arrive in Orenburg with the Sultan Ablai, accompanied by a large number of tribal chiefs, elders, and common people. At the time of their visit to Prince Urusov, they were received with the same honors as were shown to Abulkhair. However when they entered the tent, instead of delivering an address, each presented a letter whose content had the same sense as Abulkhair's speech, and for that reason we have not believed it appropriate to transcribe these letters here.

*648 After the letters had been read to him by an interpreter,
644 Prince Urusov responded with flattering remarks and promised them, in the name of Her Imperial Majesty, her good graces, assistance, and protection should they show themselves to be faithful subjects. Then he proposed to the Khan as well [192] as to the Sultan and the Kazaks of their suite that they swear the oath. Abul Mahmet and Ablai at once complied with the request of the head of the expedition, knelt on a golden rug, took off their headgear and swore their loyalty according to their customs. Then they kissed the Koran, placed it on their heads, and placed

[192 cont.]
their seal on the leaves on which the oath was written in lieu of signature. In imitation of them, 128 Kazak elders of the Middle Horde swore the oath in a neighboring tent, and the people took the oath outdoors. This ceremony was followed by a feast, the firing of artillery, etc.

On the following day the Khan, accompanied by Ablai, returned to Orenburg to discuss Kazak matters. During this meeting Prince Urusov particularly insisted that they should escort the caravans coming from Russia or returning there, that they should surrender the goods seized by the Great Horde from Muller's caravan, and that they should put an end to the disagreements existing between the Kazaks and the Volga Kalmuks. They were unable to satisfy this last request because they belonged to a people which was more accustomed to pillage than to obeying its chiefs. Furthermore, the Kalmuks had suffered more from the Little Horde, which was their closest neighbor. We will add, by way of proof, that in this same year, 1740, Abulkhair himself sent nearly 3,000 Kazaks to ravage the Kalmuk uluses.

It was impossible to satisfy the demand for escorts for the caravans. Ablai, who was more powerful than Abul Mahmet, could have assumed this obligation, but it was not to the advantage of the people or the chiefs, since no matter how high a price the escort received, it could not counterbalance the benefits accruing to the Kazaks from seizing the goods.

Two days after the first meeting with the chiefs of the Middle Horde, Prince Urusov invited them, together with the sons of Abulkhair, to come to see the maneuvers of the infantry and artillery. Abul Mahmet and Ablai admired the exercises [193] and especially the fireworks which were displayed in their honor. But in order to avoid meeting Abul Mahmet, Nurali and Erali not only failed to appear in response to the invitation which they had received, but left Orenburg the same day without taking leave of Prince Urusov.--It was later learned that the real reason for this hasty departure was the fear of being kept as hostages in Russia at the instigation of Abul Mahmet.

The Khan and the sultans left Orenburg giving every sign of submission and devotion to the Russian government. But the events